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ABSTRACT

The paper traces artists' social movements in the 1960s and 1970s and examines two results: (1) the stimulation of administrative coordination within and among established arts institutions, and (2) the creation of innovative arts institutions run by the artists themselves. Events leading up to these movements included the New Deal arts programs, which set a precedent for federal support, and the postwar economic expansion, which led to growing competitiveness and commodification of art, as a few artists received the most support. By the 1960s, artists mobilized to confront major arts institutions, demanding increased participation in decision making as well as increased representation of minorities and women artists. They also asked the institutions to become involved in major social issues. When no response was made, some artists in the mid-1970s organized and established artists' cooperatives and associations which attempted to meet their own needs by providing channels which allowed artists to reach the public directly and to deal with social issues. As a result, the art world today is divided into two parallel groups consisting of the alternative art world of cooperative galleries, artists' advocacy groups, and artists' publications, and the dominant patron/art/gallery/museum complex. (CK)

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ARTISTS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS OF THE 1960's AND 70's: FROM PROTEST TO INSTITUTION FORMATION

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Introduction

Artists social movements injected a new element intc the dialectic between creative innovation and cooptive absorption in American culture during the 1960's and 70's. On the one hand, the new artists movements stimulated a wave of administrative coordination within and among the established arts institutions. At the same time, innovative arts institutions, run by artists, were created to meet artists own needs.

This paper will show how, in the late 1960's, artists implicitly followed the Alinsky method of social movement organization. (Alinsky, 1972) Symbolically significant numbers of artists were mobilized to confront major arts institutions. Demands were made on these institutions to allow increased participation of working artists in their decision making process as well as representation of minorities and women artists. The focus was also on getting these institutions to use their influence to change government policy on major social issues such as the Vietnam war. When the museums and professional associations did not or could not respond to fulfill these demands some artists withdrew from political activity with a sense of futility. By the mid-70's, however, other artists turned to a strategy of Institution-Formation, organizing new institutions that would attempt to meet artists needs directly. (Etzkowitz, 1970) The artists social movement of the 70's consolidated the establishment of artists cooperatives. These artist run galleries provided new channels for artists to reach publics without blockage from the art establishment complex of dealer , museum, and critic. Organizations were created to deal with issues of occupational health and safety and tenants rights. Political action groups that represented the concerns of artists directly to policy makers and the public were also formed.

Aesthetic and Organizational Counter Trends

When the art market expanded during the 60's all generations of living artists were caught up in the ebullience of growth. As a result of the affluence of the art world and politicization of artists, minority artists, women artists and new constituencies within the artists community made their demands on arts and funding institutions. The radicalization that some artists had undergone in the antiwar movement and in groups such as the Art Workers Coalition provided a base for a new social movement of artists made up of each previously ignored constituency. Out of this ferment groups were organized to demand that women and minority artists' work be acknowledged and accepted into shows, galleries and collections. These artists demanded access to and inclusion in the art world system. The resistance that they experienced galvanized their self consciousness as disenfranchised artists. Rejected as an artist, many women became women artists. Politically radical artists of the late 60's and early 70's organized new artist support structures while searching for an integration of aesthetic and political praxis.

Organizations such as the Foundation for the Community of Artists (FCA) provide alternative reference groups for artists and also act as a political lobbying group to meet the unmet and ignored needs of the working artist. Within or loosely affiliated with these groups are artists such as Elliott Barowitz and Walter Weissman, who in paint and sculpture are creating a politically informed aesthetic. Barowitz's most recent one man show consisted of a series of paintings integrating elements of American art history

with contemporary technological imagery which forces a new perspective on the political significance of earlier art as well as contemporary American politics.

In the series "The Instruments of Power" Barowitz retains Thomas Hart Benton's formal structure while updating the content. Barowitz, as does Benton, utilizes a rural scene as a backdrop upon which he imposes the instruments and weaponry of a modern technological society. For Benton's farm and cornfields Barowitz substitutes a Maine coastal island with its network of abandoned World War II lookout towers and pillboxes. Benton's 1930's instruments of power, the machines of transportation and production (trucks, aeroplanes, trains, and ships) are replaced by their contemporary counterparts, jet fighter planes in apposition to contemporary ships, locomotives and trucks. Through this landscape which juxtaposes rural scenes with modern instruments of power he scatters images of contemporary Chinese industry. Through this imagery he shows the absurdity of recent ideological conflict. The iconic forcefulness of the instruments of power in the incongruous rural setting stimulates the viewer into an unexpected questioning of military industrial hegemony.

Walter Weissman's recent sculptural installation occupies almost the entire small gallery. An architectural structure resembling building and city entitled "Truth Trough" consists of black walls with a door sized aperture filled by a sheet of plexiglass shield. The sculpture plays with the experiences of presumed access and denied entry. As a sculptural interpretation of Kafka's "Before the Law" in which entrance is denied to a social structure

that maintains an ideology of access -- the legal system, Weissman's piece is an abstraction of the critique of liberalism into a three dimensional form. This work enables the viewer to experience a political critique through an aesthetic form.

These artists' works and the artists movements are attempting to analyze, challenge and present alternatives to two major tendencies in contemporary cultural life: 1) the rationalization of culture and 2) the corporate penetration of the art world. Rationalization of culture involves organizing the production and distribution of arts products and activities according to bureaucratic, corporate and industrial lines. The corporate and bureaucratic modalities become the dominant ethos integrating the rebellious romantic bohemian individual artist into an organized entrepreneurial and government agency system involving both market considerations and bureaucratic regulations.

Bohemia has been tamed and merchandised as a life style. Yet Bohemia still lives as a myth of freedom and independence. The artist is utilized as a source for the changing fashionable accoutrements of bourgeois lifestyle. The world of fashion relies almost entirely on avant-garde artistic innovation for its new objects and concepts of marketing. Anything the artist does today, no matter how far out, no matter how unsettling, has the potential of being incorporated into the commodity realm. For example, the designs for furniture that resulted from practical considerations of loft dwelling have been made into commercial lines of "high tech" furniture. During the early 70's Harold Rosenberg debated Renato Poggioli and Hilton Kramer on the viability of the concept and

reality of an avant-garde. In one way or another they all agreed that the traditional avant-garde was finished. Nevertheless by the late 70's in New York the "new wave" movement in the East Village had all the earmarks of a genuine bohemian avant-garde. This punk subculture developed new artforms in music, film and performance as well as a highly distinctive presentation of self (i.e. grooming, costuming, makeup). While existing as a genuine bohemian movement the external manifestations of their appearance were immediately seized upon by the lifestyle entrepreneurs in makeup, fashion, hair design and popular entertainment (niteclubs, and cabarets).

This phenomenon of incorporating avant-garde styles into the everyday life of the contemporary bourgeoisie is not a new phenomenon. It was exemplified in Max Ernst's 1919 lithograph entitled "Let There Be Fashion, Down With Art." Since the 1920's the pace of incorporation has accelerated until the present moment when the distinction between art and fashion has been virtually eliminated. Much of Warhol's work, such as his portraits done in the 70's, bring the fashion persona into the art object while Chris Burden transforms the T.V. ad and public relations stunt into performance art.

The transformation of artistic visions into commercial products is paralleled by corporate and government influence on the major institutions of the art world. The art world of the early to mid 60's consisted of a loosely integrated group of independent institutions such as galleries, museums, schools. The economic affluence of the period allowed for a growth in cultural

consumption and demand. Although this private sector grew in the realm of consumption, institutions taking advantage of the new affluence expanded beyond the capacity of private family wealth and endowments to maintain adequate levels of support. The result, an impending financial crisis for virtually all museums led to a lobbying effort by such organizations as the American Association of Museums, the Associated Councils of the Arts and state Arts Councils to gain increased appropriations for the national endowments. The late 60's witnessed gradual growth in state and federal arts budgets to support these institutions.

At the same time art schools were graduating an unprecedented number of aspiring artists. Due to general American affluence and growing arts budgets the middle class art school graduate expected a new entitlement: the right to work and be supported as a professional artist. During this new period of expansion of the art world artists rightly perceived that the majority of support went to the institutions, not the creative individual. Demands that greater attention be given to the needs of individual artists were only slowly and reluctantly met. The ensuing frustration catalyzed and stimulated the reemergence of an artist self help movement. The emergence of this movement coincided with the peace movement to end the war in Vietnam. Artists organizations attacked the art world as representatives of established institutions in the hope of forcing a redistribution of resources based upon artists' definitions of their own needs.

The art world responded to these challenges and confrontations by organizing along corporate and bureaucratic lines. The first

step was increased coordination between art institutions and private and public funding agencies through the movement of personnel from one institution to another and a major national effort to train a new specialist: the Arts manager or administrator. Henry Geldzahler, the present Commissioner of Cultural Affairs of NYC has moved freely from university to gallery to federal agency to museum. The early arts administrator was a connoisseur or member of an upper class family with art world connection. Currently the new generation of arts administrator integrates all the managerial skills required to operate any bureaucracy dealing with public and private funds.

The art world represents the last major sector of American society to become bureaucratized, rationalized and politicized. While some sectors of the art world have become increasingly standardized new areas of alternative expression have opened up. The present situation in which establishment and insurgent groups contest for the resources offered by government funding has its origins in the depression era of the 1930's.

The 1930's

On September 24, 1933, twenty-five artists threatened by discontinuance of a New York City relief program for unemployed

white collar workers, organized the Emergency Work Bureau Artists Group that soon became the Unemployed Artists Group (UAG). The UAG successfully petitioned Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's advisor on relief activities, to set up a Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). PWAP employed artists on creative assignments for from one to six months. The artists who were brought together by this common employment formed a broader organization, the Artists Union, to press for further government funding for unemployed artists and to develop proposals for the organization of public art.

Meetings of the Artists Union were characterized by heated debates. The key issue was the nature of public art. Should artists produce murals in the Mexican tradition or confine themselves to easel painting? What should be the content of public art? Should it take the form of abstraction and formalism or social realism? Despite the aesthetic and political arguments the reality of the situation was one in which the artists met the project requirements of the Federal programs while lobbying and demonstrating under the sympathetic eye of local administrators to keep these programs alive. (Rothschild, 1972)

The New Deal arts programs survived for a decade, from 1933-1943. Three legacies remain from this era: 1. a body of historically significant art work; 2. the support conditions under which a generation of artists survived and had the opportunity to develop the beginnings of the new international post World War II art styles; and 3. a precedent for Federal support of artists.

Although the art programs were eliminated, along with other depression relief measures, as government resources were devoted to the military effort from 1940 on, their influence continued through the actual physical presence of murals and paintings in public buildings across the nation even when these works were often ignored and abused. There also remained the active memories of artists and their families. While often skeptical of the aesthetic value of the styles in which they worked on the Federal projects, these artists nonetheless appreciated that they were supported as artists during a time when there were minimal alternative sources of support.

The New York school of the 40's to 60's developed out of work that many of these artists did privately after fulfilling the requirements of the WPA projects. The networks that were created among artists during this period provided the social base for the post World War II expansion of the art world.

The Post World War II Era

A new art market emerged out of the massive expansion of American influence and economic growth after World War II. Art entrepreneurs coordinated galleries, dealers, collectors, curators, museums, critics and art journals to merchandise art more efficiently and profitably. The new art market provided both a set of opportunities and frustrating barriers for hopeful artists. For while opportunities to show and sell their work increased a restrictive star system simultaneously emerged.

During this period the New York school reached a peak of international influence. (Sandler, 1976; Rosenberg, 1973)

Skeptical of political involvement and ideologies, these artists focused on individual aesthetic development. They were bound together in a loose collegial affiliation revolving around personal friendships and a supportive interest in the development of individual styles. These artists possessed a sense of community that supported a new aesthetic and pursuit of individuality in their art.

In the early stages there was a soft-pedalling of competitiveness in personal relations. This communality was in part a carry-over from the depression era. Competition among artists and the developing stratification would later be exacerbated by the ever intensifying inequities of the art market. Members of the New York school retained a community of shared aesthetic concerns despite the divisiveness engendered by the elitist nature of the art world.

Nevertheless, over a twenty year period, economic and professional frustration increased for many as the pyramidal structure of the reward-recognition system excluded large numbers of artists. Instead of the increasing resources being distributed to a wider range of artists who had achieved critical acclaim, the structure of the art reward distribution system was able to accommodate only a few upon whom it heaped excessive reward.

A few artists at the top of the pyramid garnered the largest percentages of the expanding rewards. An increasing majority at the bottom were effectively locked out despite aesthetic merit. These artists gradually became aware of the structural impediments built into the art market. While directing their efforts at

gaining access to the success system a disenchantment evolved that would later help fuel the protests and confrontations of the late sixties and early seventies.

The Re-politicization of Artists

The late nineteen sixties witnessed a resurgence of artists' political activity energized by patterns of disenchantment and hope for systemic reform or transformation. The artists movement was similar in form and political style to the concurrent peace and student movements. Not since the nineteen thirties had visual artists been so politically aroused. The Artworkers' Coalition (AWC) based in New York City was the scene of most of this activity.[1] The AWC formed as a result of the protest of an individual artist, Takis, against the way that the Museum of Modern Art was installing his work. A demonstration on his behalf demanded that artists control the way in which their work was exhibited. The demonstration attracted other artists who shared these concerns. The discussions that took place during the picketing of the Museum revealed a wide range of common dissatisfaction. Approximately 40 artists and critics felt that the status quo was not inevitable and change conceivable. (Toch, 1965) They formed a group and prepared to confront major arts institutions with demands for change.

AWC saw itself as a movement of engaged visual artists concerned with attracting the unorganized national constituency of artists to challenge the undemocratic and "exploitative" conditions of the art world. In statements of its "demands" AWC called for the

destruction of the nexus of critics, galleries and museums that controlled access to the art market. AWC wanted to terminate museum retrospectives that manipulated art historical evaluations to the financial benefit of trustee/collectors while predominantly presenting the work of white male artists. AWC declared itself in favor of replacing the pyramidal structure of the art market and the hierarchical organization of arts institutions with a "participative democracy" composed of artists, institutional representatives and community representatives.[2]

The demonstration that catalyzed the organization of the AWC was one of a series of events that precipitated a critical mass of social consciousness among a significant number of artists. They were sufficiently aroused to engage in organized dissent and collective action as participants in a social movement in the cultural and political arena. In its early stages, from marching around the sculpture garden of MoMA with placards decrying lack of artist input in exhibition policy, to meetings at "Museum," a lower Broadway loft, there was a general feeling that a connection existed between what was wrong with arts institutions and the overall civil crisis in America. But the nature of the connection and the role of artists in movements for social change was strongly disputed.

AWC meetings were held Monday nights at "Museum," an artist-run loft exhibition space in a commercial building near NYU in Greenwich Village, New York City. After a few weeks of meetings three analytical positions emerged: 1. to use the moral influence and artistic ability of artists to challenge current American

political policy; 2. to focus criticism on the inequities of the art world; and 3. an understanding that the art world could be reformed only within the context of transformation of the rest of American society.

These positions were the basis of political strategies that divided AWC into opposing factions. One faction wanted to challenge inequities in artists' working conditions. A second faction wanted artists to mobilize themselves to participate in left liberal political causes such as the anti-war movement. A third faction wanted to combine a critique of the art world with a stand on broader political issues.

The different positions represented friendships and professional associations established prior to AWC affiliation. Only a highly impassioned and brilliantly argued new position from the floor could alter any of these loyalties. The new initiatives which did emerge came from individuals who joined AWC without prior affiliation. For example, one such AWC member articulated a comprehensive analysis of the role of culture in American industrial society. This artist was able, at the meeting just before a demonstration at the American Association of Museums (AAM) to show other AWC members that there was a connection between Boards of Trustees of corporations, government agencies and the direction of arts institutions and cultural policies. The highly controversial and attention-getting demonstration at the AAM conference in which artists confronted Nelson Rockefeller in the back halls of the Waldorf Astoria hotel then escalated into the famous "ArtStrike Against Racism, Sexism and Fascism."

From 1969 to 1971 AWC engaged in a spontaneous ebb and flow of confrontations and melodramatic negotiations with museum officials, trustees, gallery owners and administrators of government art programs. The goal was to pressure these officials into accepting AWC demands as the model for new programs in the art institutions they administered.

Political momentum and media visibility intensified discussion and argument over theoretical analysis and practical direction within AWC. As AWC drew public attention artist-celebrities treated it more seriously. They began to attend meetings and, because they enjoyed reputations in the art market, naturally assumed that they would take over leadership. This aroused a great deal of resentment among members who had worked long and hard for AWC goals, yet they were reluctant to raise this issue at meetings as it would have been considered graceless and would have alienated support which was effective at the moment. Moreover, AWC was further fractionated by an underlying and unstated division between those individuals who participated in AWC out of a felt sense of moral and political outrage and those who appeared to participate to make contacts so as to further their careers in the art world. All of these overt and covert dissensions made it difficult for AWC to organize an ongoing program of activity. Most actions were sporadic, temporary and resulted from crisis situations.

Following the suppression of the prisoner rebellion at Attica State Prison, the AWC demonstrated at the Museum of Modern Art in a final protest against political repression and the

unresponsive institutions of the art world. AWC demanded that Nelson Rockefeller resign as governor of New York and as a trustee of MoMA. Following this dramatic and ineffectual demonstration, the currents of rage, frustration and powerlessness within AWC escalated. Increasingly enervated, AWC members perceived their efforts to change society and the institutions of the art world to be futile. Within a few weeks of the Attica demonstration attendance at AWC meetings dramatically declined and the organization soon dissolved.

Some artists have attempted to reconstitute groups similar to AWC in the mid to late seventies. These groups have been both more theoretically sophisticated, yet even more wracked by conflict. The Artists Meeting for Cultural Change (AMCC), for example, comprised a number of clashing factions. Each claimed to represent the most authentic radical approach in the arts. Each faction protected its turf, closed ranks and claimed monopoly of the only valid approach. Nevertheless, AMCC was able to achieve some striking successes. A demonstration against the John D. Rockefeller III collection, used by the Whitney Museum of American Art as their major Bicentennial show, produced the Anti-Catalog. The Anti-Catalog illustrated AMCC's contention that the Rockefeller collection is skewed in favor of a history of America and American art which almost totally ignores the presence of women, Blacks, minorities and the poor, both as subjects and creators of art. Despite the very real yet symbolic success of these demonstrations (symbolic because the notoriety of the Anti-Catalog produced no appreciable change in Whitney Museum policy), MACC, unable to resolve its internal factional disputes, finally dissolved.

During the post-Vietnam, post-Attica period, many artists, discouraged by resistance to their proposals for change, underwent an experience of re-privatization. With grim determination they once again tried to come to terms with the art market by producing saleable commodities. Others looked for innovative styles of artistic and cultural creation that would symbolically undermine bourgeois culture without the artist having to re-engage in social or political action. These artists believe that the innovation of new media and relationships of aesthetic and communication expression can ultimately alter social reality. A third group of artists, politicized in the late 60's and early 70's, has attempted to remain organizationally active. Some proceeded to revive recent models of protest. Others attempted to create new institutions to meet artists' needs directly.

Formation of Artists Institutions

An alternative approach to organizing artists emerged in the 1970's. This strategy emphasized the development of an institutional structure to enable artists to gain professional autonomy, distribute their own work, gain political representation, and influence the future of art policy.

Some of these new groups developed out of fragments of the old AWC. AWC survivors gradually coalesced into three different orientations: a variety of women's caucuses, independent art

production groups such as the Collective Graphics Workshop Inc., and a political organizing group calling itself the National Art Workers Community (NAWC).

The women's groups directed their activity at achieving long-overdue equity for women artists in all the enterprises of the art world. This meant not only gaining entrance into the existing structures and privileges of the art world but also generating new styles of being an artist.

The Collective Graphics Workshop evolved out of an AWC committee and was incorporated in June 1972. The Workshop teaches graphic arts and produces graphic works for political causes, especially within the women's movement in art.

The National Art Workers Community (NAWC) was a very small group initiated by three former AWC members. These individuals studied and consolidated a variety of programs concerning arts subsidization and artists rights and welfare proposed in Europe and the United States over the past half-century. They presented a synthesis of these proposals for consideration by artists throughout the country in the first issue of ART WORKERS NEWS distributed at the January 1971 convention of the College Art Association.

Initially NAWC was ignored by the majority of artists previously associated with AWC. Skepticism and bitterness about the utility of political action had swept over the art world. After so much effort so little had been achieved. Gradually, other artists from a variety of groups such as the Artists Tenants Association, Citizens for Artists Housing, the SoHo and NoHo

artists organizations and Artists Equity began to coalesce around NAWC and the ART WORKERS NEWS. These artists realized that the conditions undermining their autonomy would not disappear as the result of emergency actions sporadically undertaken. A more persistent and longer range strategy was called for. NAWC became a membership organization, pursued tax-exempt and non-profit status and incorporated as The Foundation for the Community of Artists (FCA).

FCA's intention was to be more programmatic than AWC or NAWC. The FCA membership wished to investigate the viability of using legislative and legal tactics. They desire incremental yet substantive reforms in the areas of health insurance, studio and loft housing, health hazards, discrimination, and employment. These specific interests gradually coalesced into a coherent overall strategy. When pressure for concrete reforms proved ineffective, FCA would work toward the creation of artist-run organizations to meet artists needs. Where established art institutions could not be influenced to acquiesce to legitimate artist rights parallel artist-managed projects and agencies were to be created.

During the 1960's and 1970's artists organized on a temporary or long-term basis over two issues: 1) larger political agendas including global issues of peace and political-economic justice, and 2) art world organizational issues such as exhibition opportunities, control of publication, grants and funding which prevented access to professional and career opportunities. Visual artists, who are notoriously difficult to organize, could be broken down into the following categories in response to these issues:

1) Artists who always sought only personal solutions to what they defined as personal problems; 2) Artists who saw the personal and political as related and were willing to take ad hoc collective action and then drop the action (after the emergency was over) in favor of the individualistic lifestyle of the creative artist; 3) Artists who saw the need to sustain cooperative action over time in response to the all of the issues.

Under conditions that stimulated emergency action where artists were responding to serious problems of inequity in the art world or in the form of humanitarian responses to global crises, ad hoc committees have been set up. Much of the work of these committees might have been done under the auspices of the FCA with whom many had shared attitudes and responses. But membership or cooperation with FCA was held in suspect by artists unwilling to join up with a group dedicated to long-term activity on behalf of artists' wide-ranging political goals. So these parallel committees were generated to dissolve at the end of any given crisis. Through the emergency committee experience a number of artists have come to see the need for sustained continuous artists' political activity. A number of them have joined with the FCA.

The establishment of federal employment programs in the 70's was one focus of artists' political action. When discussion was initiated in Washington about a Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), Michael Newton, Executive Director of the Associated Councils of the Arts, welcomed the lobbying participation of artists groups in convincing the Congress that jobs for artists in the public sector, creating art and art education projects, was a

legitimate interpretation of the CETA mandate. The drive to promote the idea of CETA jobs for artists in New York City was initiated and coordinated by the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF); the FCA, representing artists; the Cultural Council Foundation, representing foundations; and New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), representing government. The FCA led in the organization of the New Alliance for Artists in New York (NAANY) to coordinate the drive for CETA art jobs.

The struggle to gain 500 jobs for artists in New York continued for almost four years before it was realized. While the overall project is administered by the Cultural Council Foundation, FCA directly administers several CETA funded projects. It has been on the basis of such new programs that FCA has been able to expand its services to its artists membership.[3]

While most funds go to established arts institutions, insurgent groups are often able to make a successful case for their funding. Once these groups are in existence, despite the struggle for continued funding they represent the emergence of an artists-controlled enclave in the art world. The result of government intervention, on the one hand, has been to strengthen a faltering arts establishment, and on the other, to provide barely sufficient levels of funding to alternative arts institutions. From this precarious base they must struggle to generate additional income.

Two new mural-type movements have recently been created. City Walls Inc. with government and corporate sponsorship have created minimalist supergraphics in cities throughout the nation. Yet at the same time and with public funds directed through local community boards, a new community mural movement or people's art has emerged as documented by Eva Cockcroft and John Gibson in Towards A People's Art, E.P. Dutton.

While these new artists social movements have not transformed the art world, neither have they been co-opted by established institutions. Instead, the beginnings of a pluralistic universe of arts institutions now exist. Museums, government agencies and artists organizations attempt to legitimate alternate and conflicting definitions of how art should be produced, distributed and consumed. The destabilization of a unitary art world insures that issues are disputed in a public arena. Typically, ideological differences surface in the context of conflicts over the proportion of funds to be distributed to established or insurgent arts institutions. The dependence of virtually all arts institutions on some percentage of government funding places art in the same relation to the larger social structure as philanthropy, medicine and other social service activities consisting of an institutional mix of public, private and insurgent elements.

In contrast to the secrecy of the private art market, the accountability of public funds insures that all groups must publicly justify their activities. The art world thus begins to become a diverse universe. Traditional established institutions are beginning to accommodate themselves to a world in which they can no longer monopolize cultural resources. Alternative arts institutions, through their artist and community run activities and programs, set forth a progressive definition of arts issues. Out of the protest movements of the late 60's and early 70's a new artists movement is emerging that has the potential to provide alternative forms of culture.

Galleries and museums did not welcome the art produced by feminist, minority and radical artists. This early rejection added fuel to the political organizing of these groups. The impact of these political movements has in turn made access to galleries and museums somewhat easier. The radical art of Joseph Beuys and Hans Haacke has been both rejected and accepted by major galleries and museums over the past few years as has the feminist art of Judy Chicago.

As major shows are given to new art expressions there is a broadening of the spectrum of political discourse within the realms of contemporary aesthetic innovation.

Dada and Surrealism

Earlier in the 20th Century the Dada and Surrealist movements developed through an equal concern for political and aesthetic change. Each was as much a social as an art movement and within

each the sociopolitical and aesthetic modes continually influenced and reinforced each other. When William S. Rubin mounted a major Dada and Surrealism retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, Harold Rosenberg characteristically challenged the show for re-writing history and art history by presenting the movements as autonomous aesthetic developments and stripping them of their socio-political nature.

Nevertheless the sociopolitical legacy of Dada and Surrealism remains a powerful foundation for a continued sense of renewed interaction between artists' political movements and aesthetic innovation today. As a result of this legacy the reality of working as an artist is granted a broad sociopolitical encouragement to work freely in any conceivable mixture and trajectories of aesthetic experimentation. The accepted notion that any and all means of artistic experimentation, innovation, synthesis and production is legitimate is a consequence of earlier groundbreaking synthesis of art and politics in Dada and Surrealism. One of the Dadaist attacks on bourgeois commodity relations took the form of creating an anti-art, an art which in words and material attacked the traditional forms and materials through which the illusions of affirmative beauty were brought into the art object and used as entertainment of, beautification of, legitimation of the bourgeois world. Dadaist anti-art was to be ugly; to use materials not previously used in art objects. This art was surrounded by written manifestos of radical protest and activities which outraged bourgeois aesthetic and political expectations.

Dada's political challenge led the art movement to a breakthrough in the use of materials. Over time, after the initial shocks were accommodated, anti-art became a legitimate thread of art history. The art world institutions established a new way of rewriting art history. But artists were given a new freedom, a new license for exploitation and experimentation. This is a freedom to acknowledge the richness of creative discoveries based on the interaction of the political and aesthetic; the opportunity to deepen the play between consciousness and imagination because the realm of creative innovation had been broadened by Dada and Surrealism's re-uncovering of the necessary unity between the aesthetic and the political.

Conclusion

Art styles and artists political movement, once innovated, remain potent resources for ideological change, even when rendered dormant by forms of passive repression (budget cutbacks, etc.). The form in which artists political movements and new aesthetic visions interact results in transformations in both and a potential movement towards a newer mode in which aesthetic and praxes are further integrated, synthesized. The artists political movement, while hamstrung by recalcitrant bureaucrats and politicians in funding and programming policy agencies, has helped to stimulate new funding and program schemes more sensitive to the needs of artists and more supportive of minority and women artists who have too long been the targets of discrimination.

The cultural activities of art style and artists political movements mutually influence each other and percolate over time in the greater cultural ambience. The art work, artists life styles and political action of the "WPA" period with its "New Deal for Artists" is consciously brought to the fore in the current debates on funding to provide a weapon and example of new need for new styles of artists support.

These examples in the realm of culture stimulate our research into the unexpected, unintended consequences of seeming cooptation in which political and economic institutions absorb challenges coming from the cultural sector, seemingly neutralizing these challenges in commodity forms. Yet over time, in unexpected ways the absorbed cultural challenges offer people new modes of accepted and institutionalized perception and experience which contribute (from within the established realm of discourse itself) to newer and more serious challenges to the status quo. These movements help to stimulate and sustain an independent series of aesthetic and social visions, a set of critical and utopian visions which, even if coopted, serve as a source of alternative from within the system itself. For even as commodities they point out the strains and contradictions of a system that is not able to sustain its own legitimations.

The aesthetic form retains its independence as a critical irritant even when the content does not appear to directly challenge the structures of domination -- e.g., Herbert Marcuse, The Aesthetic Dimension, and what Lio Bronstein called the immanent critique in

the visual arts of "the what of the how level" (Bronstein, Lio, Fragment of Life, Art and Metaphysics, Bo:.d-Wheelwright Publishers, New York, 1952).

Moreover, the political movements of artists and the new institutions that have emerged as parallels in the arts distribution network such as artist-run cooperative galleries serve as a support system for the new aesthetics of women, minority artists, and artists whose work sustains a critical social vision. During the post World War II era art has been transformed from a private concern of a relatively few individual artists and wealthy collectors into an occupational class and institutional structure connected to the larger political economy of the United States. During this period art became an important economic activity. (Mayor's Committee on Cultural Policy, 1974) An institutional complex of galleries, patrons, museums and art publications developed in which the creation of art as an aesthetic experience was subsidiary to the capitalization of art as an increasingly valuable commodity.

In the past ten years a critique of the commodification of art has emerged and a significant number of artists have engaged in various attempts to restructure the art world according to democratic principles. An alternative art world of co-op galleries, artists advocacy groups and artists publications has been created by artists and operates parallel to the dominant patron/art gallery/museum complex. Artists political activity, arising out of protests against the Vietnam war, merged with the politicized atmosphere created by competition for government funding between established and insurgent arts institutions. These developments,

combined with 20 years of pent-up rage against a discriminatory art market, enabled politically conscious artists, aware of the history of 1930's government funding of artists, to agitate for the creation of new institutions that allowed artists to take some of the organizational structure of the art world into their own hands.

NOTES

1. Material on the Art Workers Coalition and the Foundation for the Community of Artists is based on participant observation by Laurin Raiken.

2. Their original thirteen demands, which were re-adapted a number of times to detail specific organizational reforms for museums, galleries, art journals and cultural institutions, can be found in Documents printed by the AWC.

3. FCA presently publishes a national newspaper, The Art Workers News, devoted to legal, legislative, social, political and economic issues facing artists. FCA also conducts education on health hazards facing artists, programs in support of fair housing practices in all areas of loft/studio conversion, the employment of artists, research on discrimination against women and minority artists, the exploration of legislation concerning artists legal, contractual and economic rights, tax and estate legislation and the establishment of more effective coordination among existing artists groups. In addition to these specific projects the FCA answers innumerable inquiries on all issues concerning artists and through its meetings and growing number of professional service publications has become a major clearing house for ideas, programs and change in the art world.

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